DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 309 CS 206 236

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TITLE Commission on English in Teacher Education: Chairman's Report.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 30p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; Continuing Education; *English; *English Instruction; *English Teacher Education; Inservice Teacher Education; Language Arts; Language Teachers; Literature Appreciation; Multicultural Education; *Professional Development; *Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

This informal summary of proceedings from a conference on the preparation of English teachers in the 1980s identifies several fields demanding development in the interest of better English teaching at all levels. After briefly identifying conference participants and explaining the conference program development, the summary presents both a detailed outline of the week-long program and observations about the program that include identifying themes that developed in the multicultural discussion groups. The topics for the discussion groups are listed as (1) the nature of English in teacher education, (2) role shift in the preparation of teachers of English, (3) teacher education in English and the multicultural society, (4) literature in the classroom, (5) oral communication and drama in the preparation of English teachers, (6) teacher education and the initiation of the beginning teacher, and (7) continuing education for teachers. (AEA)

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COMMISSION ON ENGLISH IN TEACHER EDUCATION : CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ted Rush

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COMMISSION ON ENGLISH IN TEACHER EDUCATION : CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Introduction

This Report is intended to indicate something of the background, as well as the program and outcomes, of the work of the Commission in Sydney in August 1980. When the members of the Commission met in one of the Lecture Theatres in the Carslaw Building at Sydney University each was aware that the emphasis was to be on personal participation in the exploration of issues judged by them to be important in the preparation of teachers of English in the Eighties. Following five days of intense activity and discussion participants left with their personal perceptions and assessments of the work of the week, and with their view of what matters changed or strengthened or stimulated in some way. This Report is not intended to be a detailed chronological account of the proceedings, nor an exhaustive overview of the treatment of issues. Rather it is intended to indicate what its planning committee organised, how the week was spent, and something of what members of the Commission reported as pertinent to English in the Eighties.

Membership

Membership of the Commission was made up of teacher-educators and teachers from Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa. Of its 70 members 50 were from Australia, 14 from New Zealand, 8 from the United States, 3 from Canada, with one from South Africa and one from the United Kingdom. One indication of the diversity of background and experience of members of the Commission was that each State of Australia was represented, and that members from New Zealand came from the range of their teacher-education institutions. Along with regular participation in the organised activities of the Commission, this enabled a wide informal exchange

of information and views about teacher-education in English, and a consequent increase in international understanding.

As well, the Commission had the assistance of persons acknowledged for their expertise and knowledge or leadership in areas under consideration. Those who contributed in this way were

Gwyneth Dow, Department of Education, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

John Dixon, Bretton Hall College, Wakefield, England

Ian Forsyth, Ebury Teachers Centre, London, England

James Moffett, Mariposa, California, U.S.A.

James Britton, Institute of Education, University of London, England

Diana Davis, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Victoria, Australia

Harold Rosen, Institute of Education, University of London, England

Background

Planning for the Commission began following the AATE Conference in Hobart in 1978, and was further developed at the AATE Conference in Perth in 1979. A planning committee, associated with the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English, was set up in Melbourne. After input from a number of sources a group was established: members came from post-secondary, secondary, primary, metropolitan and country sectors of teacher education. It was decided that issues pertinent to the 1980's should be explored and three areas were designated . These were

1. The Syllabus and Methodology in the Training of Teachers of English - what do teachers need to know and how should it be learnt?

2. English Teachers, Training, and the Community - accountability, the literacy debate, cutbacks and squeezes, and training for the future.

3. Change and Reform in the Eighties - adapting to the needs of communities affected by both increasingly rapid rates of change, and by the explosive growth of new subject-based information and research.

It was intended that the Conference program should be developed to encourage the exchange of ideas, with a high level of participatory involvement by each of the members of the Commission. The emphasis was to be on a range of activities, rather than on the formal presentation of papers. It was hoped that by working together and exchanging views and reactions, participants would learn about issues central to others, and extend their own views and visions.

It was also intended that visiting experts available to the Commission, and others invited to take part in the activities of the Commission, should be encouraged to lead discussions and take part in the deliberations of groups set up within the Commission, rather than to read papers or make formal presentations.

Further, if at any stage during the Conference a group of persons should wish to pursue a particular interest it was agreed that this interest would be encouraged. Wherever possible, participants would be helped to follow through interests outside the program which they saw as central to the theme of the Commission.

To facilitate the work of the Commission participants were invited to bring any materials which they saw as relevant to the advertised program such as Handbooks, English Teacher Association statements, public comment from newspapers or political reports, tapes of discussions involving students and staff, videos, case studies, textbooks and reports. It was also agreed that the life and teaching experience of the members of the Commission should be

seen as a key resource of the Conference.

The day-to-day program of the Conference was to include a variety of working arrangements such as presentation of position papers and case studies, use of small discussion groups and panels of speakers, and regular report-back sessions. Participants were invited to bring short prepared statements on particular aspects of English Teacher Education which they believed to be important, or essential to the development of courses in the future. Provision was to be made for the display and distribution of such statements within the Commission. It was hoped that each member would be able to provide the Commission with resource material useful in various parts of the intended program.

In order that the Commission should begin its program within a shared framework it was suggested that members of the Commission should read

- Richard Ohmann: English in America - A Radical View of the Profession OUP New York 1976
- Margaret Mathieson: The Preachers of Culture: A Study of English and Its Teachers George Allen & Unwin London 1975
- English Education May 1980 (NCTE)
- The text of radio talk given by the Chairman of the Commission on 3RRR Victoria, June 1980.

In planning for the week's program it was agreed that it was important that opportunities should be created for liaison with other Commissions, and consequently some arrangements were made for joint meetings or participation in the Commission on English Teaching and the multi-cultural environment, the Commission on Schools, learners, the community and the teaching of English, and the Commission on Research, the teacher and change.

The final program for the work of the Commission during the week at Sydney is set out. It was completed after a weekend planning session attended by John Dixon from the United Kingdom. Members of the Committee realised that they were in danger of holding a mini-conference as they revised the week's program and it was agreed that the proper dynamic of the conference should be to allow the participants to undergo a similar 'working through' experience. With this in mind, the program was altered to provide a framework with sufficient flexibility to allow for individual and group activities. In summary, emphasis was to be on participation by members of the Commission, flexibility of arrangements, and regular input by visiting experts.

The Week's Program

ICTE 1980 : COMMISSION ON ENGLISH IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Monday August 18 : Notions of Change

Aim: to allow members to explore the theme of change in English teacher education.

Preparation : Members should give prior thought to the following two areas:

1. Personal: what have been the most important changes in your own teaching in the last 5...10...20 years?

2. Institutional: how does institutional change take place?

Members should bring with them illustrative material of a personal kind which they may use in a discussion group in Session Two.

SESSION 1 Welcome by Ted Rush, Commission Chairman.

9 - 10.30 Margaret Gill will introduce the session in which individuals

in small discussion groups present to each other, in graphic form, a time-line (or life-line) representing key changes in themselves as teachers and thinkers.

SESSION 2 — Large discussion groups, combining two or three Session I groups, in which several personal mini-case studies will be presented, making use of materials which members have brought.

11-12.30

SESSION 3 — Introduction by John Dixon

1.30-2.45 — A Case Study of Change in Teacher Education presented by Gwyneth Dow, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Gwyneth Dow has considered this issue in "Learning to Teach: Teaching to Learn" 1979 Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, Boston and Henley. Question session will follow.

SESSION 4 — Ted Rush will chair a discussion on issues arising out of the

3.15 - 4 — day's work including final planning and preparation for Day Two, Tuesday August 19.

The Commission on Research, the Teacher, and Change will be invited to join us in Session 3.

Tuesday August 19 : Perspectives on the Declared Curriculum Syllabus and Methodology

Allocated visitors: Ian Forsyth all day
James Britton all day
James Moffett 1.30-4 p.m.

Aims: (i) to examine current practice in the areas of syllabus and methodology.

(ii) to decide on necessary changes in these areas in the light of our conceptions of the possibilities of the future.

Preparation: Members should bring with them syllabuses/courses of study/ curriculum statements with which they have been involved at the developmental, teaching and/or learning stage. These will be used in Sessions Two and Three.

SESSION 1
9 - 10.30

A panel of three - James Britton, Diana Davis, Ian Forsyth - will address themselves to the following question:

What in your experience has been, and perhaps still is, the hidden curriculum in English Teacher Education?

A question session will follow.

SESSION 2
11 - 12.30

Margaret Gill will introduce the three working sessions with a narrative account of the deliberations of the Commission Planning Committee which led to its decision on the activities for these sessions.

SESSION 3
1.30 - 2.30

Small interest-groups will then be formed, deriving out of participant interest and areas explored in Day 1 and Session 1 of Day 2.

It is suggested that groups consider the following questions:

Session 2 What are the questions which need to be asked about syllabus and methodology in English in Teacher Education?

Session 3 What sorts of answers can we begin to offer?

SESSION 4 — In Session 4, each group will report back, in a form the group chooses, on the deliberations of that group.

3 - 4

Wednesday August 20 : Teachers, Training Institutions and the Community

To be run in conjunction with the Commission concerning "Schools, Learners, the Community and the Teaching of English".

Allocated visitor: Harold Rosen 9 - 12.30 p.m.

Aims: to focus on two main issues:

(i) The Public Image of the English Teacher

(ii) Teacher Preparation and Political Climates.

Both topics will relate to issues of integral concern to other sessions of this Commission.

Preparation: Members should bring material related to the topics in question.

SESSION 1 — Chairman : John Dixon

9 - 9.40 — Introduction to the topics

1) H. Rosen : A General View

2) E. Rush : A case in point.

SESSION 2 — Individual participants will take up issues raised in and related

9.40-10.30 to the statements made in Session 1, and direct their attention to the preparation of written statements on these matters. (Areas for consideration might include expectations raised by particular types of schools; pressures from identifiable sources such as parents, employers, examining bodies and tertiary institutions; pressures from textbook publishers, or the media

or the public.)

SESSION 3
11 0 12.30 — The first hour will be a sharing session of individual responses for our commission. The last half hour will be a preparation session for Thursday in which each participant will indicate the interest group she/she will join. These interest groups arise from the activities of Day I, II, and III.

Thursday August 21 : The Development of the Profession

Allocated visitor: James Britton 9-12.30 p.m.

Aims: (i) to determine the factors influencing change
(ii) to formulate strategies for handling change.

Preparation: Members should provide input from personal experience, documentary evidence, official statements from various educational bodies and so on.

SESSION 1
9 - 10.30
and
SESSION 2
11 - 12.30
and
SESSION 3
1.30-2.30 — The Commission will work in interest-groups for the first three sessions, and it is expected to be a day of sustained personal activity. The Commission Committee will have a liaison function between groups, and James Britton will be available as a consultant for the two morning sessions. Opportunity will be available for case studies or prepared material to be presented to special interest groups set up on Wednesday.

SESSION 4
3 - 4 — A plenary session will be conducted which will be used by groups as a sounding board for statements, formulations, sets of

strategies/principles, and other material prepared in Sessions I, 2, and 3.

Friday August 22 : English Teacher Education in the 80's

Towards a Final Report

Aims: (i) to allow groups and individuals time to refine and consolidate views

(ii) to allow groups and individuals opportunity to make presentations to the whole commission.

SESSION 1 — Groups and individuals will work on final drafts of report and presentations. Some participants may choose to join the Teacher Education Option of the Commission on English Teaching and the Multicultural Environment for its final report.

9 - 10.30

SESSION 2 — Report-back session for all members of the Commission.

11 - 12.30

SESSION 3 — This session will be used for reflective comments on the Commission.

1.30-2.30

SESSION 4 — Final session for all Conference members.

4 - 6

Some Observations Arising from the Program

The first day began as intended with each member, using large sheets of paper and felt-tipped pens, drawing his or her own "life-line" as a teacher educator in any way considered appropriate. This pictorial representation was intended

to allow each member to have something concrete and familiar to share with others, while, at the same time, being a "consciousness-raising" exercise for each person. The "life-lines" were discussed in groups, and then displayed around the homeroom for the duration of the conference.

These "life-lines" were intended as conference documents and several significant observations can be made of these statements, arising as they did out of different countries, cultures, and time-spans.

The most striking theme was the very wide disparity between the curricular intentions of the participants' formal education, and the intentions of the curricula in which the members had participated or helped develop. Most had been educated for conservatism, to accept rather than question, to continue a prescribed course rather than to stand aside and consider. For instance, one participant spoke of his own "traditional, rigid but comfortable tertiary education" which had been followed by "a traumatic first three months as a secondary teacher when I confronted and gradually adapted to a completely foreign set of values, attitudes and styles". Another member considered his own secondary education retrospectively: "it marked my first foray into public exams which taught me how unjust and inaccurate they are (since I did so much better than many who I knew were better than I)."

Many participants indicated that they had been radicalised to a greater or lesser extent in their views on education, and this had led them to a perception of teacher education significantly different from those implicit or declared in the teacher-education courses in which they themselves were trained.

A second theme to emerge was that of the "channels" of change. In many instances this took the form of self-education, rather than formal studies.

The statement "became a learner again at university" was relevant for a smaller number. Attendance at conferences which had proved crucial, the reading of certain books which were highly influential, being able to discuss and work with overseas writers, teachers, researchers, the power to devel new curricula all these were seen as being highly meaningful and central in terms of professional development. Again, another member spoke of "the realisation of the need for humane structures, and a real humanist basis for school where the depth of relationships is vital."

The third theme, and the theme most explicitly spelt out, was the professional difficulty and dilemma faced in resolving the past and the future, in developing curricula which will allow future teacher education to benefit from past experience. These examples of statements comments and questions illustrate the issues:

> "Taught a subject at high school to remind me what it was like. Tried theories I'd been lecturing on. Not very successful."
>
> "Growing disillusionment with the whole 'education' industry-educational administrators, accountability movements that keep me too busy to be accountable in teaching to students."
>
> "Difficulty in preparing student teachers who are both flexible, and with a firm grasp of a consistent methodology."
>
> "Can we teach everything the community wants in schools?"
>
> "Guilt at not providing more of a post-training service for those students battling in their first year out."
>
> "How to assess the whole syllabus?"

Later in the day, Gwyneth Dow spoke of her experiences in an alternative one-year end-on program in which she was involved for a number of years at the University of Melbourne, and gave some insight into the personal and professional difficulties which arise within such a program.

Introducing the second day of the Commission, the three keynote speakers addressed the group on the topic, 'What in your experience has been, and perhaps still is, the hidden curriculum in English Teacher Education?' James Britton was concerned with the difficulties student-teachers faced in adapting and adjusting to their future roles as English teachers. As well, he commented on the sometimes strained relationship between older established English faculties and younger Education faculties as each is involved in the preparation of teachers for schools. Dr Diana Davis reminded the Commission of the importance of the question of what it is that students take away from courses in terms of content and personal development. She noted the discrepancy in weighting of academic and Education components between primary and secondary courses. Ian Forsyth raised the issue of the sort of knowledge about language which needs to be transmitted to students, and how this can be effectively done.

Interest groups were formed in the second half of the day, and on the Wednesday morning a combined session was held with the Commission on 'Schools, Learners, the Community and the Teaching of English'. Harold Rosen attended and participated in discussion.

The interest groups were re-formed on Thursday, and on Friday they reported back. These various interest groups worked on issues that they saw as central to the Nature of English in Teacher Education in the 80's. At the close of the Conference short reports of positions were received from interest groups on the following:

The Nature of English in Teacher Education

Oral Communication and Drama in the Education of English Teachers

English Teacher Education and the Multi Cultural Society

Teacher Education and the Initiation of the Beginning Teacher

Role Shift in the Preparation of Teachers of English

Continuing Education of English Teachers

Literature in the Classroom.

These reports arose from discussions between people who spent sessions together considering issues which they identified as of particular interest to themselves, and important in the preparation of teachers of English at this time.

Interest Group on the Nature of English in Teacher Education

Leader: Robert Brown, Adelaide College of the Arts and Education, South Australia.

This interest-group reported that is accepted that a key function of education and schooling is to ensure that students extend their knowledge of language, in both its verbal and non-verbal forms, and that the focus for this language should be the use of language in a context which ensures the integration of the communication skills of speaking, reading, acting, listening and writing.

Each course in teacher education, but especially courses in English in teacher education, should therefore demonstrate that language learning is an active process, dependent on an appropriate learning context. Courses and programs should be informed by current knowledge of the processes of language acquisition, the variety of language forms, and of socio-linguistics. Language learning should be developed through both written and spoken media, and the methodology of teaching and learning should be based on language in action.

A key component in any course in English teacher education should be an exposure of the student to a wide range of literature, including the national literature, literature of other nations, and children's and adolescent literature.

Student response to literature should be developed through a variety of methods, including creative as well as critical responses. The methods by which literature is taught in teacher preparation courses should provide models for the ways in which literature is to be taught in schools.

Teachers of literature should be aware of the two-fold nature of the processes of interaction: firstly, the interaction between the reader or readers and the text, and secondly the interaction between persons considering the same text.

Further, in view of the English teacher's close association with literacy in its broadest sense, deliberate preparation of English teachers in literacy studies is necessary. Such studies should cultivate an understanding of reading and writing as developmental processes which change in nature and which increase in complexity and demands.

Teachers of English in schools should play a crucial role in ensuring that all students receive continuing education in the development of reading and writing skills, and should act as support personnel to other subject teachers in the development of "language across the curriculum" practices.

Interest Group on Roleshift in the Preparation of Teachers of English

Leaders: Ron Martin, Secondary Teachers College, Auckland
Trevor Dobbin, Secondary Teachers College, Auckland

This interest group reported that it had considered issues related to role-shift during the preparation of teachers. Roleshift was seen as that process of personal growth and associated shift in perception undergone by a person moving from one occupation or lifestyle to another. The group was particularly interested in the differences in personal qualities required of a successful University student as compared with those needed by the beginning teacher.

To help promote the qualities required in the beginning English teacher. This interest group made the following suggestions

1.1 School practice should be based on shared experience between teacher-educators and persons preparing to become teachers through

i) Shared planning and objectives

ii) Shared classes and monitoring

iii) Shared practice diary

1.2 Roleplay should be used to rehearse desirable teaching models and to resolve problems encountered on teaching practice.

1.3 The co-operative nature of this approach aims to build confidence in self and an appreciation of co-operative teaching methods. Peer concern and help should be central, as should personal and peer evaluation.

2. Beginning teachers should be made aware of the complex social fabric in which they work: each teacher should be seen as part of an extensive social web, involving thousands of students, parents, and colleagues. Such awareness should be developed in regular course work, and in small tutor groups. Activities such as play production, choral speaking, poetry reading, play, video, and film viewing and production, and

personal writing should be used to develop this awareness in beginning English teachers.

3. The methodology of teaching and learning used at the post secondary level should provide a sound model for teaching and learning at the secondary level. Each course module should be taught by a tutor who should, as far as possible with an adult audience, use methods appropriate to teaching the topic in a school.

4. A reading diary should be kept in all courses, and shared with a group of students and the tutor.

A student planning group should help the tutor prepare classes.

Evaluation at the post-secondary level should have the variety and purpose of school evaluations.

Interest Group on Teacher Education in English, and the Multi-Cultural Society

Leaders: Helen Moore, School of Education, Latrobe University, Victoria
Helen Jenkins, Melbourne State College, Victoria

This interest-group reported that while many aspects of multiculturism were common to all Commissions at the Conference those of special importance in the preparation of teachers of English were:

Firstly, the development of an understanding of the nature of language and culture.

Secondly, the cultivation of an awareness of the linguistic and cultural identity of teachers, and of the capacity for self-scrutiny in each teacher.

Thirdly, the relationship of language learning and skills to social structures and political power.

Fourthly, the recognition of the need for a continuing dialogue between "mainstream" English teachers, E.S.L. teachers, and teachers of languages other than English.

Interest Group on Literature in the Classroom

Leader: Peter Holloway, Melbourne State College, Victoria

This interest group considered the role of literature in the teaching of English in classrooms, from the preschool level to its teaching in graduate courses in tertiary institutions.

It was the view of the group that in the preparation of English teachers the fundamental interdependence of language and literature should be reaffirmed; and that, while recognising the need for each subject area to respond positively to rapid cultural change, the need remains for a clear definition of the parameters of English in relation to the remainder of the curriculum. Programs for intending teachers should be presented in a manner which acknowledges the integrity of the subject and the balance of its parts.

Further it was the view of the group that, because of the internationalism of the 80's, it is essential that any English teacher education program include the study of national literatures, literature in translation, and new literatures in English.

It was also the view of the group that the teaching of English should be seen as taking place in three separate modes: in English as a first language, in

English as a second language, and in English as a foreign language. This division, although arbitrary, was seen as useful in reflecting of the variety of functions English serves for individuals.

Finally the group suggested that each country represented at the International Conference should be urged to investigate and report with recommendations on the teaching of literature at the kindergarten, primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. The Language Development Project in Australia was seen as a useful model. Aspects which could be included in such a project include the development and refinement of responses to literature, the treatment of literature in classrooms, the assessment of responses to literature, the uses of literature in subjects other than English, reasons for interest in literature beyond school, connections between literature and creative writing, and literature textbooks.

Interest Group on Oral Communication and Drama in the Preparation of English Teachers

Leader : Les Cartwright, Frankston State College, Victoria

This interest group reported on the need for oral communication and drama to be seen as integral components in the teaching of English. Because all teacher-education students should have the opportunity to participate in a program which focuses on oral communication and drama, post secondary institutions preparing teachers should initiate changes which ensure such opportunities.

Communication should be understood as sharing experience, and being able to do this in a manner appropriate to time, place and audience. Post secondary learning methods should be more action-based with the aim of learning by doing,

or with the teacher setting up situations for the students to experience and on which to reflect.

Interest Group on Teacher Education and the Initiation of the Beginning Teacher

Leader : Paul Brock, University of New England, New South Wales

This interest group reported that it had considered four areas

- firstly, principles seen as fundamental to teacher education and the initiation of the beginning teacher.

- secondly, the practical consequences of these principles within teacher-education institutions.

- thirdly, implications for schools and the community of these principles.

- fourthly, implications for teachers beyond the first year of teaching.

While recognising that these matters are important to all teachers, they are of particular importance to English teachers because

(a) language is basic to the whole development of the child and directly related to that child's background, and so the English teacher must be particularly sensitive to and aware of social and individual differences of students.

(b) a high degree of initiative and creativity is required to generate programs which reflect the substance and spirit of a syllabus in English with broad, long-term, and life-encompassing aims and objectives.

(c) English teachers are faced with a series of community expectations, interests, and concerns. These are sometimes seen to be in conflict with contemporary teaching and learning practices based on intensive research in English teaching and learning.

The following propositions were identified as central.

(i) That all teacher education programs directed towards initiating students into classroom teaching must recognise that a fruitful interaction is essential between theory resting on a tested emperical base, and practice.

(ii) That communication between teacher - education staff, school staff, students and employing authorities must be such as to ensure the proper planning, supervision and evaluation of teacher education programs.

(iii) That the professional responsibilities of the teacher can be met only if adequate time is provided for consultation, reading, mutual professional support, and the exchange of ideas and teaching strategies.

(iv) Inservice courses for teachers should lead to intellectual and professional regeneration and explorations, as well as re-training. Employing authorities should guarantee arrangements which ensure that such courses take place.

Some practical consequences of these principles in teacher-education in English are that

(i) the focus in end-on courses for the beginning secondary English teacher should be on theory and practice relevant to the initial classroom

teaching experience.

(ii) students and teacher education staff in English should have contact, both within teacher education and in the community, with students and adults from a variety of cultural and social groups.

(iii) effective cooperation should be ensured between teachers in schools, administrators in employing authorities and teacher education staff in planning and reviewing English teacher-education programs.

(iv) beginning English teachers should be sensitised to their own assumptions about Life and Society within the context of the differences and "distances" between themselves and others. In particular the beginning English teacher should be prepared to handle any "culture shock" in their initial teaching experience: for example, sensitisation to unfamiliar sociological situations should be developed through simulation games and role play.

(v) teacher educators in English should preserve close contact with school classrooms through teaching and research.

Further important issues, for schools and for the community, related to teacher education and the initiation of the beginning teacher are

(i) the need for each employing authority and school staff to guarantee a formal and informal support system for the beginning teacher. This should include an induction program and access to information which welcomes, assists and advises the beginning teacher, and enables that teacher, if unsuited to teaching, to withdraw with dignity.

(ii) the need for the local English Teachers Association or its equivalent to play a key role in initiating the beginning teacher into the school and the community.

(iii) the need for the beginning teacher to be made aware of community-based services, especially those designed to help newcomers understand and respond to their new environment.

Finally this group suggested that close contact between beginning and more experienced English teachers should be cultivated in the development of English curriculum theory, including opportunities to consider together new developments in English and the teaching of English in schools.

Interest Group on Continuing Education for Teachers

Leader : Margaret Gill, Rusden State College, Victoria.

This interest group reported that, in the world-wide context of falling student numbers and reduced funding for pre-service education and in-service education, continuing education takes on extra importance. In-service models, used in the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa and Australia, were considered. The group affirmed that it should be the right of every teacher to have access to continuing education: teacher education should be recognised as a continuous process evolving through initial education, induction and further professional development. Adequate money and time should therefore be guaranteed for continuing education programs and services, which should be responsive to the needs of teachers as intimated by teachers themselves and suggested by research.

Such were the issues taken up by interest-groups. The varying lengths and

and detail of report was a reflection of the time spent on these matters by those concerned, and in no sense indicates the relative importance of the issues considered: some members of the Commission worked with more than one group, and some groups met over several days whereas others reported after much more brief meetings. The topics considered are indicative of matters uppermost in the minds of the Commission.

Final Comments

When the Commission concluded on Friday afternoon, August 22, 1980 it was clear that its members had spent five days in fruitful consideration of the Nature of English in the Eighties. That the last session did not resolve issues or agree to substantial statements about the Nature of English is, of course in retrospect, not surprising. The range of matters currently important is great, and the particular debate on many of these matters is often intense and at first sight may seem confused. What was clear was that many people had looked at issues in a serious way, that they were aware of the urgency of these issues in the preparation of teachers of English. Behind each of the reports of the interest-group lay issues which should continue to be investigated. If this Report is of value, that value lies in this identification of fields requiring, or rather demanding, development in the interests of better teaching of English at all levels.

The Report also serves as a reminder to those who took part in meetings, discussions, people, activities and unrecorded conversations. In this sense the Commission played its part in the growth of an international community of English teacher-educators. By working together, in talking together, and together committing views and propositions to paper, people came to know and understand each other better.

Finally, as Chairman, I record my thanks to the small group of people present at the Conference - Margaret Gill, Peter Holloway, Theresa Sullivan and Helen Tippett - and to those unable to attend - Ralph Beebe and David McRae - who over months, and longer, continued in a patient, reliable and fruitful manner to prepare for the Commission. As well I thank two people who helped as Deputy Chairman - Graham Boardman and John Dixon. The Commission was its members and in that sense it continues its work as these people continue their work in teacher-education in English.

Edward R Rush,
CHAIRMAN

COMMISSION ON ENGLISH IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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